

# DINIYOTHLI KANOHEDA

(Dee-nee-yoth-lee Kaw-no-head-ah - Children's News)

Volume VII, Issue II

FEBRUARY 2003

## THE NEW YEAR BRINGS GOOD NEWS

By Tom Copeland, Director, Redleaf National Institute

Need some good news? Here are the tax changes for 2002 and 2003 that will benefit family child care providers.

- ✦ The standard mileage rate for 2002 has risen to 36.5 cents per business mile, up from 34.5 cents in 2001.
- ✦ A new "bonus" depreciation rule will give providers approximately triple their normal deduction for many items purchased new in 2002.
- ✦ The IRS will be issuing a new ruling in January 2003 that will allow providers to claim business food expenses by using a standard meal allowance rate (set by the IRS) without having to keep any food receipts. This ruling will save many hours of record keeping work for most providers. The ruling will be effective for 2003, but providers should be able to use it for calculating their 2002 food expenses. We don't know yet what the allowance rate will be, but when it is released we will send out a special email to our members. (Visit [www.redleafinstitute.org](http://www.redleafinstitute.org) to find out more about membership).
- ✦ In 2003 the child and dependent care credit will be increased for the first time in many years. The maximum credit amount will rise to 35% (up from 30%) of qualified child care expenses. In addition, the limit on the amount of qualifying expenses will increase from \$2,400 to \$3,000 for one child and \$4,800 to \$6,000 for two or more children. This means that many parents will receive an increase in their tax credit of \$330 for one child, or \$660 for two or more children. With these additional dollars in hand, some parents may be able to pay more for child care for next year. Child care providers should set their rates for 2003 with this in mind.
- ✦ For 2002 Congress has increased the contribution limits on IRAs. This includes a traditional IRA, Roth IRA, SEP IRA, and SIMPLE IRA. The new limit for a regular or Roth IRA is \$3,000 a year per person, or \$3,500 if you have reached age 50 by the end of the year. The higher contribution for the SEP IRA is up to 18.5% of your net income in a year. The higher contribution for the SIMPLE IRA is up to \$7,000 a year. These higher contribution limits mean that you can set more money aside for your own retirement. Everyone should be taking advantage of this tax saving opportunity.
- ✦ Low income child care workers can also take advantage of a new IRA tax credit for 2002. Families that earn less than \$25,000 (single) or \$50,000 (married) are eligible for a 10-50% tax credit for contributions to any IRA plan. This credit is in addition to any existing tax deductibility of IRA contributions! The income limits are defined as the net income of a family child care provider. You can make contributions to most IRAs until April 14, 2003.
- ✦ If you are not eligible for health insurance through an employer plan, and purchase health insurance on your own, you are entitled to deduct 70% (up from 60% in 2001) of the insurance premium on your Form 1040 to help reduce your federal income taxes. This will rise to 100% in 2003.

Further details of these tax changes are contained in my book "2002 Family Child Care Tax Workbook and Organizer", published by Redleaf Press ([www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org) 800-423-8309). This book describes how to fill out (line-by-line) all relevant tax forms, includes copies of the forms, and explains complex topics such as hiring helpers, amending your tax return, selling your home, and much more.

# HEALTH INSURANCE

By The Redleaf National Institute

Family child care providers have always struggled with the issue of health insurance. For a variety of reasons, discounted or group rate health insurance has not been available to them, and they have been forced to obtain coverage by purchasing expensive individual policies. With many health plans announcing premium rate increases this year, the cost of health insurance is becoming a concern for many providers.

Ehealthinsurance, a national health insurance administrator, has recently established a program that offers the opportunity to evaluate the benefits and cost of many different insurance providers. The company has collaborated with most major health insurance carriers in the country (Blue Cross Blue Shield, HMOs, PPOs, etc.) and has listed the details of each carrier's policies and rates on its website, [www.ehealthinsurance.com](http://www.ehealthinsurance.com). You can now compare rates, coverage, and deductibles for each plan to find the one that best suits your needs. The cost to purchase the insurance through this service is usually much cheaper (5-30%) than through the insurance carrier directly because of the use of Internet technology.

Morgan and Associates, an insurance broker that has provided liability, disability income, and business property insurance to child care providers for many years, is working to make the benefits of this new program available to the family child care industry. For more information on the ehealthinsurance program, and for other child care insurance needs, visit the Morgan & Associates website at [www.morganinsurance.com](http://www.morganinsurance.com). Providers who are currently members of Redleaf National Institute receive a credit worth the cost of membership when purchasing liability insurance through Morgan & Associates.

Providers can also find a health insurance carrier through an independent insurance agent or by contacting insurance companies directly. The Redleaf National Institute website, [www.redleafnationalinstitute.org](http://www.redleafnationalinstitute.org), lists a variety of health, liability, and retirement and financial planning insurance providers on its [Insurance Information](#) page.



# FEBRUARY IS...



## **AMERICAN HEARTH MONTH**

Take care of yourself, so you can be there for the children! Developing a healthy heart should begin at a young age. A healthy diet and regular exercise make a difference.

Contact the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Ave., Dallas, TX 75231 for information about the prevention of heart disease. Check out this website for curriculum that teaches health and nutrition concepts through movement activities:

[www.healthonthemove.com](http://www.healthonthemove.com)

## **NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

Brushing teeth at least twice a day is an important routine for children to develop. Each child should have a toothbrush at your home or center. Be sure to label and store them separately. Children only need a small dab of toothpaste and will need an individual cup for rinsing and spitting. Have parents replace the toothbrush every 6 months, and/or after the child has been ill.

Contact the American Dental Association, 211 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 440-2593 for activity sheets and teaching materials. Visit the website: [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org) for more information.

Contact your county health department or the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Dental Service at (405) 271-5502. They may be available for teaching proper tooth brushing or to provide in-service for the children or parents. Ask about available pre-school programs on dental health.



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## O-SI-YO

by Tina Smith  
Resource and Referral Specialist

I want to remind everyone that April 6-12 is the Week of the Young Child. The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

The theme for this year's celebration is "Children's Opportunities -- Our Responsibilities". Today we know more than ever before about the importance of children's earliest years in shaping their learning and development. Yet, never before have the needs of young children and their families been more pressing.

The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that *children's opportunities are our responsibilities*, and recommit ourselves to ensuring every child experiences the type of early environment - at home, at child care, at school, and in the community - that will promote their early learning.

Plan something fun. It does not have to be big or elaborate. Ask area businesses to display children's artwork. Invite parents or community leaders to read a story. Host a parent breakfast. Schedule a special field trip or outing. Be creative, have fun and CELEBRATE CHILDREN! For more information on the Week of the Young Child visit the NAEYC website at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

If you have any questions or comments about services offered by the Child Care Resource Center or by the Licensing and Subsidy Programs please contact us at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230. We enjoy working with you.

DINIYOTHLI KANOHEDA  
Child Care Programs



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## CHILDREN IN OKLAHOMA

- ⇒ A child in Oklahoma is born into poverty every 49 minutes
- ⇒ A child in Oklahoma is abused or neglected every 32 minutes
- ⇒ A child in Oklahoma dies before her first birthday every 21 hours
- ⇒ A child or teen in Oklahoma is killed by gunfire every 6 days

### Child Care and Early Education in Oklahoma

- ⇒ Percent of Children under age six with all parents in the labor force (2000) 58.3%
- ⇒ Average annual cost of child care for a 4-year-old in a child care center (2000) \$4,967
- ⇒ Percent of children eligible for federal child care assistance that actually receive help (1999) 16%
- ⇒ Average annual salary of a child care worker (2000) \$13,228

For more information on CHILDREN IN OKLAHOMA visit the Children's Defense Fund website at [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)



## FEBRUARY IS...

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY February 12

Share these books to learn more about President Lincoln:  
Abe Lincoln's Hat by Martha Brenner  
If You Grew Up With Abraham Lincoln  
by Ann McGovern

### VALENTINES DAY February 14

Celebrate love and caring with homemade cards and special games and activities.

Encourage children to make cards to deliver to nursing homes, retirement centers, or sick children at the local hospital.

Do a cooking activity with the children and let them bake something special to share with their families.

### GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY February 22

Learn about President Washington by reading the following books:

#### If You Grew Up With George Washington

by Ruth Belove Gross

#### George Washington - A Picture Book Biography

by James Cross Giblin

#### George Washington - The Man Who Would Not Be King

by Stephen Krensky

#### George Washington's Mother

by Jean Fritz

## GRANTS PROGRAM

By Arlene Greenawalt  
Grants Program Coordinator

Allowable costs for the Child Care Grant Program are items that are related to the health, safety, and development of the children who are in the provider's care. If an item requested does not relate directly to providing for developmentally appropriate, safe, and healthy child care or a documented need does not exist, it is considered a non-allowable cost.

BELOW IS A NEW LIST OF NON-ALLOWABLE COSTS:

1. Costs of construction or major renovations.
2. Remodeling that is not related to a documented health and safety need.
3. Costs for administrative uses, such as computers, computer software, and copy and fax machines.
4. Personnel costs.
5. Bills or expenses that occurred prior to the effective date of the contract.
6. Funding for sectarian purposes, or programming based on religious philosophies.
7. Costs to rent or lease a facility.
8. All costs must be necessary to improve the quality of care of children being cared for.
9. Cost for central heat/air units.
10. Costs for reimbursement of any expense incurred prior to the effective date of the purchase requisitions. All purchases are pre-approved.
11. Improvements necessary for adults at the center or home will not be considered.
12. Adult sized furniture (sofa, kitchen table and chairs, etc.).
13. Items not appropriate to ages of children served/enrolled.
14. Costs for subscriptions/monthly teaching curriculums.
15. Costs for entertainment equipment (TV, VCR, video games, DVD players, etc.).
16. Costs for roofing repair.
17. Costs for electrical repair or plumbing.

The review team reserves the right to approve all or part of a grant request.

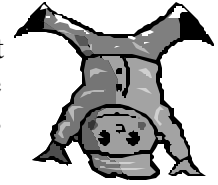
If you would like a grant application or have any questions, please call (918) 458-7613 x234 or toll-free 1-888-458-5230 x234.



## POINTERS FOR PROVIDERS

By Leah Duncan  
Child Care Services, Subsidy Program

Just a few reminders about policies and procedures that have been addressed in previous issues of this newsletter.



All Providers using a Monthly Contract Billing Form or Vouchers are required to account for all days involved during the billing cycles as noted on the Monthly Contract Billing Form or Voucher. For days that the child is in attendance you must document the times in and out on all days in the billing cycle for the child. Recording the times in and out must be done every day, each time the child enters into your care and when the child leaves your care. If a child is absent any day during a cycle you must document that the child was absent by writing "Absent" next to that date. If you are closed at any time during the billing cycle you must document "Closed" on the appropriate day. This information is required in order to justify payments made to Providers and also to allow the Child Care Program to effectively track approval days for children receiving Child Care Services. Failure to document all days involved will result in a denial of payment.

Remember:

- ? Cherokee Nation does not pay for days that you are closed.
- ? Cherokee Nation does not pay for Holidays unless the child we are being billed for is in attendance on the Holiday being addressed and the parents' work or school schedules justify the child's attendance.
- ? The Cherokee Nation Child Care Services School Closing Policy (listed in this newsletter) must be adhered to in order to receive payment.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance to you please call us at (918) 458-4444 or 1-888-458-6230.

**CHILD CARE PROGRAM**  
**BILLING PROCEDURES - SCHOOL CLOSINGS**  
EFFECTIVE 10-01-98

**OFFICIAL POLICY:**

**Changes in the hours of care may be authorized with no pre-approval for additional hours of child care needed due to school closings. Additional hours of care may be authorized in half-day increments. All changes in hours of care, which are not related to school closing, i.e. a change in parents' work or school schedule, must have prior authorization by a Child Care Eligibility Specialist.**

School closings include: Spring Break, Teachers Meetings, Staff Development Days, Winter (Christmas) Break, Snow Days, Official Holidays (Thanksgiving, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Easter, etc.) Times will vary by school, therefore, the Child Care Program has not set any specific days nor will we ask the parent to submit a child's school schedule. The Child Care Program retains the right to require documentation if needed. The Parent/Guardian **does not** have to call the Child Care Eligibility Specialist for school closings unless additional days are required for a child; (i.e. A child is approved for 3 part-time days and will need to attend 5 full-time days during Spring Break. The Parent/Guardian will be required to contact a Child Care Eligibility Specialist before an approval to claim the additional days can be made. ) Providers will not have to wait for Retro Forms to be issued for school closings. The current contract can be utilized. This will result in a more timely and efficient level of service to providers and parents of the Child Care Programs.

Changes in parents' work schedules, school changes, additional days of care, or residences still require verification be provided to the Child Care Eligibility Specialist. The Full-Time rate will not begin until verification of the change is received by the Child Care Office. Providers can utilize the current contract. If timely notice is received by the Child Care Office, payment for the Full-Time charge will be paid. Parents will be responsible for any unauthorized care. **Parents are required to notify the Child Care Eligibility Specialist when school is out for the summer vacation.**

**In order to claim for school closings, these procedures shall be adhered to:**

1. Providers must write in the time the child arrived, the time the child departed, the number of hours the child was there, and the amount charged for that day. (This amount is based on your established rates for Full-Time Care for the children in your facility.)
2. The reason for claiming Full-Time Care on a Part-Time billing form must be documented for each day of additional care on the contract or voucher. You must list the reason: Spring Break, Teachers Meeting, etc. beside each day you expect Full-Time payment for. Failure to properly document the reason for additional time will result in a denial of the Full-Time rate and payment of the Part-Time rate. For vouchers, mark out the AMOUNT CLAIMED, add the difference from the Part-Time to the Full-Time rate to the AMOUNT on the voucher. This is the amount you will claim for each voucher in which you can claim additional Full-Time rates. Additional Retro Forms **will not** be authorized for failure to properly document the additional Full-Time hours of care.
3. When a child has used all days within the expiration dated on the contract, the provider will total the full- and part-time days, record the number of days, the total charge of this contract, and deduct the parents co-payment. For vouchers, the provider will add up the total amount of the vouchers and submit for payment. (Reminder: The co-payment has been deducted for the voucher. The provider is responsible for collecting the difference in the amount between the voucher and the amount charged.)
4. All other current payment policy and procedures remain in effect.



## FEBRUARY TRAINING

February 3,10,17 & 24

MUSKOGEE - MRMC

Time: 6:30 - 9:00 pm

**Child Development II: Observing and Recording Children's Behaviors** - Focuses on four aspects of development - physical, mental, social, and emotional. The content shares information on observing and recording children's development; emphasizes careful observation of behaviors indicating growth; provides suggestions for enriching development through play; gives specific assistance on supporting play for each aspect of development. **Contact Sherry Grooms, MRMC, at (918) 684-2448 to register.**

February 10,12 & 14

STILWELL - CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Time: 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

**Daily Program for Young Children 3 to 6** - Explores needs of young children as the basis of programming and goals; guidelines for use of resources - people, time, space, equipment, learning activities; constructs a sample weekly program schedule and lesson plan. **Contact Ramona Drew at (918) 458-4393 to register.**

February 11 (start date)

GORE - TOTS LEARNING CENTER

**Health and Safety** - Helps plan for children's health and safety; contains guidelines for providing safe places for young children; teaches how to help children learn good habits; discusses common illnesses and emergency procedures; suggests ideas for communication with parents. **For more information on dates and times or to register for this class contact Carl Arnold at (918) 489-2530.**

February 11

MUSKOGEE - MRMC

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

**Family Child Care Accreditation Readiness Tool** - Training designed to assist providers in the use of a tool designed to identify a provider's readiness for accreditation. Will meet in Conference Rooms C & D of Muskogee Regional Medical Center. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

February 11,13,18 & 20

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 6:00 - 8:30 pm

**People: Feelings, Relationships and Environments** - Discusses how young children develop an understanding of themselves and people around them. Enables children to feel good about themselves and helps them learn positive and productive ways to interact with other people in their lives. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

February 13

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 6:00 - 7:00 pm

**"Cherokee Families"** - The importance of relationships in Cherokee families today. Presenter: Choogie Kingfisher. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

February 17 & 24, March 3 & 10

VINITA - HAPPINESS IS ...

Time: 6:00 - 8:30 pm

**Child Development I** - Outlines major growth events of the first six years of life; discusses practical ideas for meeting the needs of growth stages by observing and matching activities, materials and equipment to the children's abilities. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

February 19,21 & 26

TAHLEQUAH - HEAD START TRAINING ROOM

Time: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

**Including Children with Disabilities** - A methods class providing basic information and techniques for eleven disabling conditions. **Contact Ramona Drew at (918) 458-4393 to register.**

February 19,21 & 26

TAHLEQUAH - HEAD START TRAINING ROOM

Time: 1:00 - 4:30 pm

**Families and Child Care: A Team For Children** - Provides caregivers with insights for developing strategies to work more effectively with the parents and families of children in their care; assists in fostering an attitude of better understanding and spirit of cooperation between parents and caregivers. **Contact Ramona Drew at (918) 458-4393 to register.**

# MARCH TRAINING

March 3,10,17,21 & 31

April 7,14,21 &28

May 5,12 & 19

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 6:00 - 8:30 pm

**Core Curriculum for Family Child Care** - This curriculum is designed for family child care providers in the first year of operation or providers who would like to obtain information concerning the critical areas of child care. The CORE curriculum will cover 12 areas: Your Own Family and Personal Issues; Parent Relations, Contracts, and Policies; Health, Safety, and Risk Management; Observing Children; Child Development and Play; Planning and Setting Up the Environment; Caring for Children of Different Ages; Scheduling, Routines, and Transitions; Positive Child Management; Records and Taxes; Marketing Your Family Child Care Home; Professionalism, Advocacy, and Next Steps. This class will last for 2 1/2 hours each week for 12 weeks. Please contact Jennifer Falkner at (918) 458-7613 ext. 254 with any questions concerning the course. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

March 4,8,11 & 15

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Saturday: 9:00 - 11:30 am

**Pre Math** - A methods class for teaching children pre-math concepts and skills. Includes classroom learning activity cards. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

March 5,7,& 12

BIG CABIN - BIG CABIN HEAD START

Time: 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

**Health and Safety** - Helps plan for children's health and safety; contains guidelines for providing safe places for young children; teaches how to help children learn good habits; discusses common illnesses and emergency procedures; suggests ideas for communication with parents. **Contact Ramona Drew at (918) 458-4393 to register.**

March 6,11,24 & 27

MUSKOGEE - MRMC

Time: 6:30 - 9:00 pm

**Daily Program for Young Children 3 to 6** - Explores needs of young children as the basis of programming and goals; guidelines for use of resources - people, time, space, equipment, learning activities; constructs a sample weekly program schedule and lesson plan. **Contact Sherry Grooms, MRMC, at (918) 684-2448 to register.**

March 13

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

**Director's Series: Managing Time** - Discusses the importance of setting and organizing goals and priorities. Outlines an organized system for accomplishing established goals, and identifying and eliminating time wasters as well as procrastination pitfalls. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

March 13

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 8:00 - 10:00 pm

**Director's Series: Public Relations and Marketing** - Focuses on the tools necessary to develop public relations and marketing strategies - both direct and indirect - suitable to the customer recruitment and retention needs of his/her child care center. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

March 13 & 14

TAHLEQUAH - CCRC

Time: 12:00 - 4:00 pm

**School-Age: Theme Based Activities** - Participants will learn how to energize their school-age programs by providing fun, theme based activities. Activities are geared toward the unique interests and needs of school-age children. **Contact the Resource Center at (918) 458-7613 or 1-888-458-6230 to register.**

March 24,26 & 28

STILWELL - CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

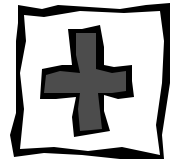
Time: 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

**Movement Experiences for Children** - A methods class on how to provide movement experiences in a daily program for young children. Includes classroom learning activity cards. **Contact Ramona Drew at (918) 458-4393 to register.**





# CPR AND FIRST AID TRAINING



Fees are: First Aid Class \$15.00

Pediatric CPR Class \$10.00

Contact the Child Care Resource Center at (918) 458-7613  
or 888-458-6230 to register for the following classes:

|             |   |                        |
|-------------|---|------------------------|
| February 13 | <b>Tahlequah - Cherokee Nation EMS</b><br>First Aid             | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| February 20 | <b>Pryor - Mayes County DHS</b><br>Pediatric CPR                | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| March 20    | <b>Tahlequah - Cherokee Nation EMS</b><br>Pediatric CPR         | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| March 25    | <b>Vinita - Happiness Is A Learning Center</b><br>First Aid     | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| April 10    | <b>Vinita - Happiness Is A Learning Center</b><br>Pediatric CPR | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| April 15    | <b>Pryor - Mayes County DHS</b><br>First Aid                    | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| April 17    | <b>Claremore - Kurtain Klimbers</b><br>Pediatric CPR            | Time: 6:00 - 10:00 pm  |
| April 29    | <b>Tahlequah - Cherokee Nation EMS</b><br>First Aid             | Time : 6:00 - 10:00 pm |

## Location Information

\*The Cherokee Nation Child Care Resource Center is located in the James Danielson Children's Village in Tahlequah.

\*Cherokee Nation Head Start is located in the James Danielson Children's Village in Tahlequah.

\*Big Cabin Head Start is located at Oak and Second in Big Cabin.

\*Kurtain Klimbers is located at 1201 W. Country Club Road in Claremore.

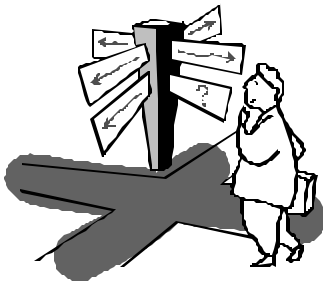
\*Mayes County DHS is located at 501 S. Elliot in Pryor.

\*Muskogee Regional Medical Center (MRMC) is located at 300 Rockefeller.

\*The Stilwell Child Development Center is located off Hwy. 51 East (in the former Stilwell Indian Clinic).

\*Tots Learning Center is located at in 108 1/2 Southwind in Gore.

\*Happiness Is A Learning Center is located at 409 W. Canadian in Vinita.



# NURSE NOTES

## Boost & Buckle: Put Your Heart Into It!

by Gayla M. Turner BSN, RN, CCM  
Child Care Health Consultant



Current federal safety standards cover children who weigh 50 pounds or less. This past fall new lifesaving legislation was passed by congress, HR 5504 or Anton's Law. This law is designed to extend the standards to include children who weigh over 50 pounds, usually children ages 4 to 8 years old. Child passengers in this age group are frequently referred to as "forgotten children," because they no longer fit in their car seat, but are still too small for adult seat belts to fit them properly. Children in this category can suffer very serious neck/spine injuries, possible vehicle ejection and even death as a result of using seat belts designed for adults.

Anton's Law is named after Anton Skeen, a four year old boy killed in a car crash in Washington state when he was ejected from the vehicle he was riding in because he was improperly restrained. Anton's mother, Autumn Skeen, became a child booster seat pioneer getting the first booster seat law passed in Washington in March of 2000. She stated, "This federal law says that our automakers, agencies, states and families must bridge the belt-fit gap for vulnerable youngsters in cars. Anton's Law puts this nation on notice that before we lose any more children because their seat belts didn't do the job for them, we must find the ways and means to see that they travel as safely as we adults do."

The law instructs the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration to require auto manufacturers to begin installing lap/shoulder belts in the center back seat by 2005.

The week of February 10-14 is Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week. Since there is nothing as close to our hearts as the precious children in our lives, let's determine to keep them as safe as possible when traveling. Check to see that they are all transported in child restraint systems (a car seat or a booster with a lap/shoulder belt), preferably in the back seat until they are 80 pounds and tall enough to use an adult seat belt properly.

**Safety Alert:** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued its second warning about the dangers of riding in or driving heavily loaded 15-passenger vans. If you currently transport children in a 15-passenger van and would like a copy of the article published in the Oklahoma Safe Kids Coalition newsletter [Prevention Perspective](#), give me a call and I'll mail you a copy, 918-458-7614 x255 or 888-458-6230.

# PARENT PAGE

## INCREASE YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE AS A PARENT

Being a parent is a tremendous responsibility. Parents are expected to feed and clothe tiny, helpless human beings, to teach them to get along in the world, and to encourage them to like themselves and others.

These many responsibilities often lead parents to question themselves and their abilities. Many times parents feel they just don't measure up to the job they're required to do.

Sometimes these feelings can chip away at parents' self-confidence and affect their ability to interact with their children. Therefore, one of the most important things parents can do is build their own self-confidence.

One way to help improve self-confidence as a parent is to evaluate realistically the job you're doing. Here are three steps to help improve self-confidence.

First, don't always expect yourself to be perfect. The picture of a "perfect parent" - one who is always kind, patient, loving, intelligent, in control, and so on - is impossible to fulfill. And it may not be so perfect in the first place.

For example, parents who are always patient may not be preparing their children for a world of impatient people. Failure is difficult enough to deal with when it is real, but trying to be perfect is simply inviting unnecessary failure.

The important thing is not perfect behavior at all times, but growth toward doing things better more often.

A second factor in realistic self-evaluation is to compare your behavior as a parent to your own past performance rather than to some other person's parenting.

Instead of feeling like a failure because you did not spend three hours a night working or



playing with your children like the parent next door, praise yourself for spending a half hour more with them this week than you did last week.

Finally, be specific about your self-evaluation. If you try a new method of discipline for a week and it fails, do not simply decide that you are a failure as a parent.

Tell yourself that you did a good job of sticking to the new plan or that you are a pretty good parent for caring enough to try something new, even though it did not work. Make your failure easier to accept by praising your success. Then move on.

From GROWING TOGETHER, December 2002.

## WRITING A SIMPLE 'THANK YOU' NOTE

An important social skill is the writing of a thank you note.

As adults, most of us know the surprise and delight we feel when we receive a thank you note from a child.

Even preschoolers can be coached to dictate a note to a friend, relative, or grandparent. Often a single sentence of gratitude is sufficient.

Most children can be encouraged to draw a picture of how the gift is being used, or a picture of the gift itself that can be sent along.

Taking time to express thanks show children that we value others' thoughtfulness, a value we want to instill in our children.

From GROWING TOGETHER, November 2002.

**\*Feel free to copy this page  
to share with parents\***

# STATE AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES

**February 7** Children's Oral Health Forum: Give Kids a Smile. Overview of Head Start Model, Issues of access to services, workforce/providers, identifying/leveraging community resources and legislation/education. Free of charge including refreshments and boxed lunch. For more information call (405) 524-4124.

**February 14-15** 2003 Annual School-Age Child Care Forum - Get Back to the Basics at the "FUNdamentals of Quality School-Age Programs" to be held in Oklahoma City, OK at the Clarion Meridian Hotel and Convention Center. Contact Sherri Bradfield at (405) 799-6383.

**February 22** CECPD Directors' Training Videoconference. Creative Play Activities for Children with Disabilities: The Directors' Perspective presented by Lynda Mhoon. For more information call Alice at (405) 799-6383 or 1-888-446-7608.

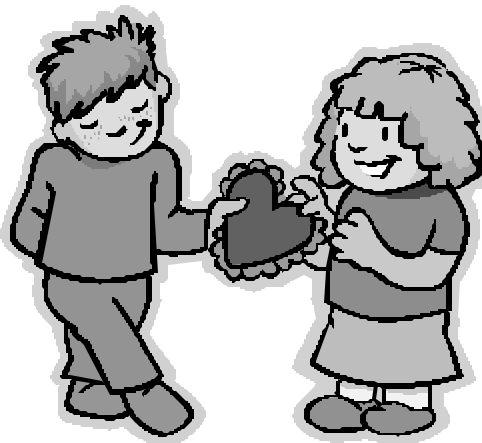
**February 27-March 1** National School Age Coalition Annual Conference, "Making Learning Fun." Registration forms are online at [www.nsacaConference.com](http://www.nsacaConference.com)

**March 12-15** Southern Early Childhood Association Conference. Contact Glenda Bean at 1-800-305-7322.

**March 28** Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health Annual Conference. BABIES CAN'T WAIT: Promoting Healthy Emotional Development in the Early Years. For more information contact Karen Irey at (405) 360-6932.

**April 6-12** Statewide 'Week of the Young Child' activities.

**April 25** Annual Administrator's Institute to be held in Oklahoma City at the Hilton Northwest. For more information contact Sherri Bradfield at (405) 799-6383.





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